

Message Text

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SUBJEC : UNIONIST COUNCIL TO VOTE JAN 4 ON POWER-
SHARING

SUMMARY: ULSTER UNIONIST COUNCIL WILL HOLD SPECIAL MEETING JANUARY 4 TO DEBATE UNPLEDGED UNIONIST MOTION REJECTING SUNNINGDALE COMMUNIQUE. NORTH TYRONE UNIONIST ASSOCIATION'S DECEMBER 19 VOTE AGAINST COUNCIL OF IRELAND REVERSES ITS PREVIOUS SUPPORT FOR FAULKNER'S POLICIES AND INDICATES MOVEMENT BY CONSTITUENCY ASSOCIATIONS AWAY FROM SUBTLETIES OF SUNNINGDALE INTO TRADITIONAL UNIONIST OPPOSITION TO ANY DEALINGS WITH IRISH REPUBLIC. FAULKNER AND COLLEAGUES ARE NOW MOUNTING LARGE-SCALE EFFORT TO SELL SUNNINGDALE TO CONSTITUENTS. BUT FAILURE OF SDLP EXPLICITLY AND DRAMATICALLY TO CONDEMN RENT-RATE STRIKE AND SUPPORT RUC, AND REPORTS OF IRISH GOVERNMENT NEGATIVISM ON EXTRADITION AND CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE, UNDERMINE EFFECTIVENESS OF FAULKNER'S EFFORTS AND INCREASE PROSPECTS OF DEFEAT FOR HIS POLICIES IN JANUARY 4 MEETING. END SUMMARY.

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1. ULSTER UNIONIST COUNCIL WILL HOLD YET ANOTHER

SPECIAL MEETING JANUARY 4 TO DEBATE MOTION TO REJECT SUNNINGDALE COMMUNIQUE.

2. OPPONENTS OF COUNCIL OF IRELAND HAD REQUESTED DECEMBER 29 MEETING, HOPING THAT THEY COULD OBTAIN UNIONIST*OUNCI REPUDIATION OF COMMUNIQUE BEFORE EXECUTIVE-DESIGNATE SCHEDULED TO TAKE OFFICE (AND BEFORE UVF TRUCE EXPIRES) ON JANUARY 1. BUT OFFICERS OF UNIONIST COUNCIL WERE UNABLE TO RENT ULSTER HALL UNTIL JANUARY 4, ACCORDING TO A UNIONIST PARTY HQ SOURCE.

3. SOURCE CONFIRMED RECENT PRESS REPORTS THAT OPPONENTS OF POWER-SHARING HAVE GAINED SOME GROUND IN RECENT WEEKS IN ELECTION OF DELEGATES BY CONSTITUENCY ASSOCIATIONS AT THEIR ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS. BUT THESE NEW DELEGATES DO NOT TAKE OFFICE UNTIL REGULARLY-SCHEDULED ANNUAL MEETING OF UNIONIST COUNCIL IN MARCH. DELEGATES ELIGIBLE TO ATTEND JANUARY 4 MEETING WILL BE THOSE WHO WERE ELIGIBLE TO ATTEND NOVEMBER 20 MEETING AT WHICH PARTY LEADER BRIAN FAULKNER'S POWER-SHARING POLICIES WERE SUPPORTED BY BARE 12-VOTE MAJORITY.

4. SOURCE ALSO CONCEDED THAT NORTH TYRONE UNIONIST CONSTITUENCY ASSOCIATION, WHICH HAD BACKED FAULKNER ON POWER-SHARING, HAD NOW, DESPITE HIS PERSONAL INTERVENTION, REJECTED COUNCIL OF IRELAND BY 2-1 MAJORITY EVENING DECEMBER 19. (COMMENT: OTHER THINGS BEING EQUAL, SWITCH OF ASSOCIATION'S SIX DELEGATES' VOTES WOULD IN ITSELF BE ENOUGH TO REVERSE FAULKNER'S NOVEMBER 20 VICTORY.) SOURCE EXPLAINED THAT THE COMPLICATED SUNNINGDALE COMMUNIQUE HAS NOT YET SUNK IN, AND UNPLEDGED UNIONISTS ARE CLEVERLY PLAYING ON TRADITIONAL FEARS AND SUSPICIONS OF IRISH REPUBLIC.

5. PREOCCUPIED UNTIL QUITE RECENTLY WITH PREPARING FOR SUNNINGDALE, FAULKNER AND HIS COLLEAGUES HAVE NOW LAUNCHED LARGE-SCALE CAMPAIGN TO SELL COMMUNIQUE TO CONSTITUENTS. PRINCIPAL SELLING POINTS ARE ANGLO-IRISH DECLARATION ON THE STATUS OF NORTHERN IRELAND AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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UNIONIST VETO IN COUNCIL OF IRELAND, POSSIBILITIES FOR HELP FROM THE SOUTH ON SECURITY MATTERS, AND COOPERATION WITH DUBLIN, TO BENEFIT OF NORTH, IN SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC MATTERS.

6. ACCORDING TO ABOVE SOURCE, OFFICIAL UNIONIST SALESMANSHIP IS HAMPERED BY FAILURE OF SDLP CLEARLY TO CONDEMN RENT-RATE STRIKE AND ENDORSE RUC -- TWO OF

FAULKNER'S PRECONDITIONS FOR SERVING WITH SDLP IN EXECUTIVE. (COMMENT: SDLP LEADERSHIP NOW HAS APPROVAL OF ITS ANNUAL CONFERENCE TO "REVIEW" RENT-RATE STRIKE, AND IVAN COOPER HAS SAID PUBLICLY THAT STRIKE HAS "SERVED ITS PURPOSE." SDLP SIGNATURE OF SUNNINGDALE COMMUNIQUE WOULD SEEM TO IMPLY CLEARLY ITS ENDORSEMENT OF POLICING BY RUC. NEVERTHELESS, MORE EXPLICIT SDLP STATEMENT IS WHAT FAULKNER NEEDS.)

7. MOST OF ALL, SOURCE LAMENTED, GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND HAS NOT SO FAR LIVED UP TO SPIRIT OF SUNNINGDALE. GOI SPOKESMEN ARE BEING QUOTED AS RULING OUT ANY CHANGE IN ARTICLES 2 AND 3 OF CONSTITUTION OR IN EXTRADITION LAWS. ASIDE FROM OUTRIGHT OPPOSITION OF LARGE NUMBERS OF UNIONISTS TO ANY COUNCIL OF IRELAND, SOURCE CONCLUDED, EVEN FAULKNERITES CANNOT SWALLOW SUCH A COUNCIL, MUCH LESS SELL IT TO WAVERERS, *F IT IS SEEN TO PROVIDE NO REAL BENEFITS TO NORTH IN TERMS OF RECOGNITION AND SECURITY. SOURCE THOUGHT THERE WAS EXTREMELY SERIOUS DOUBT THAT POWER-SHARING AND COUNCIL OF IRELAND COULD OBTAIN ENDORSEMENT OF UNIONIST COUNCIL WITHOUT SOME IRISH GOVERNMENT AND SDLP HELP FOR FAULKNER'S CASE.

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